

Boating

Each of the three lakes within Curecanti National Recreation Area has a character all its own, and each provides a different type of boating experience.

Blue Mesa Lake

Twenty mile long Blue Mesa Lake, with its 96 miles of shoreline, affords many opportunities for boating. One can lay back, enjoy the sun, and sail on one of the lake's three open basins. Windsurfing is popular in several areas such as the Bay of Chickens. Boaters can explore several arms of the lake which reach into secluded canyons. Water skiers can practice their sport in the late months of summer, July and August, when waters warm slightly.

All boaters on Blue Mesa Lake should be aware that strong afternoon winds, sometimes accompanied by storms, can cause hazardous conditions. Be weatherwise: watch for threatening cloud build ups. As soon as strong winds begin to blow, head for shore.

Water temperatures remain cold through much of the season. Windsurfers and water skiers are advised to wear wet suits.



Crystal and Morrow Point Lakes

Due to their locations in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, boating on Crystal and Morrow Point Lakes is limited to hand carried craft. The access trail for Morrow Point Lake is the Pine Creek Trail, located along highway 50. Crystal Lake is reached via the Mesa Creek Trail located near Cimarron. Fluctuating water levels and releases from Blue Mesa and Morrow Point Dams can create navigational problems. Protruding rocks, backwashes caused by water washing over submerged rocks, as well as tricky currents can overturn the inattentive boater. In addition, conditions along the river section on Crystal can change drastically during the course of a day. Heavy spring runoff from Cimarron and Mesa Creeks can further complicate matters. Before launching, be sure to assess the capabilities of your equipment and existing water conditions.

There are few passing boats on Crystal and Morrow point Lakes to assist in an emergency, so wear your personal flotation devices (P.F.D.'s) at all times!

Safety Checklist

- ✓ Personal flotation devices of correct size and type for all passengers.
- ✓ Paddle or oar ready for use.
- ✓ Bail bucket.
- ✓ Tools for minor repairs.
- ✓ Warm clothing in case of weather changes.
- ✓ Anchor and line.
- ✓ Remember, rangers are glad to inspect your boat for necessary items.

Common Sense Rules

- Don't overload, stay within capacity limits of your craft.
- Don't stand up in the boat.
- If you have trouble maneuvering in the current, lighten your load.
- Avoid getting sideways in the current.
- On river sections, don't hesitate to portage.

Report all accidents to a park ranger. Visitor contact stations are located at Elk Creek, Lake Fork, Cimarron, and East Portal.

In case of emergency call 911.